United Nations E/AC.51/1999/L.6/Add.9

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
29 June 1999

Original: English

Committee for Programme and Coordination
Thirty-ninth session
7 June–2 July 1999

Draft report

Addendum

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Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (item 4 (b))

Section 3. Political affairs

1. At its 27th and 28th meetings, on 22 June 1999, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered section 3, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001.

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the budget section and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the budget section.

Discussion

3. Support was given to the activities undertaken by the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. The importance of the functions of the programme, namely the prevention, control and resolution of conflicts, including post-conflict peace-building, was reiterated. It was agreed that preventive diplomacy and peacemaking was the most cost-effective way by which the Organization could contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. The view was expressed that efforts should be focused, therefore, on preventive diplomacy in accordance with Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations to avoid the escalating of conflicts to a level that would require the establishment of peacekeeping operations. Support was expressed for the work of the Electoral Assistance Division whose activities were undertaken at the specific request of Member States in their efforts to establish and strengthen electoral institutions and processes, incorporating the broader concept of good governance.

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4. Concern was also expressed that one of the overall objectives of the programme, namely, the promotion of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions, as described in paragraph 1.1 of the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001,[1] was not reflected in the overview of the budget section. The importance of accurate reflection of the medium-term plan was stressed.

5. Satisfaction was expressed with the inclusion of provisions for special political missions in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001. It was noted that resources for such missions previously included in the budget section for peacekeeping operations were now reflected in section 3, and that such activities were the responsibility of the Department of Political Affairs, as consistent with the provisions of programme 1, Political affairs, of the medium-term plan.

6. The view was expressed with satisfaction that expected accomplishments were included. It was observed that further thought needed to be given to the measurement of a number of expected accomplishments. The view was also expressed that some activities of this section might not be measurable and, consequently, it would not be possible to determine the expected accomplishments. The view was expressed that the accomplishments should be specific enough to facilitate objective assessment at the end of the biennium. In this connection, the view was expressed that the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation should be implemented with respect to the requirement that activities should be systematically evaluated to determine their relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact in relation to their objectives. The efforts made to incorporate a gender perspective in the Department's data-collection, research and analysis activities were welcomed.

7. A view was expressed with concern on the use of extrabudgetary resources to finance some activities that should be funded from the regular budget.

8. A view was expressed with concern on the relationship between the Department of Political Affairs and some human rights organizations.

Conclusion and recommendations

9. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of section 3, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001, subject to the following modifications:

(a) After the first sentence of paragraph 3.6, insert the following sentence: "A case in point is the promotion of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions";

(b) In subparagraph 3.37 (c) (i), *replace* Participation in the activities of *with* Maintain contacts for exchanges of information with.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 6* (A/53/6/Rev.1).